

**AREA PLAN COMMISSION OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

DATE..... March 22, 2005
TIME..... 7:00 P.M.
PLACE..... Grand Prairie Room
County Office Building

ATTENDEES NAME

Steve Clevenger
Pat Wilkerson
Paul Slavens
Geneva Werner
Dan Shaw
Robert Pechin
Genie Wilkinson
Sharon Remely
Tracy Walder
Laura Bartrom

ORGANIZATION

Citizen
Historic Jeff Neighborhood
Citizen
Vinton Neighborhood
Journal & Courier
Citizen
The Leader
Hanna
St. Lawrence/McAllister
St. Lawrence/McAllister

STAFF

Doug Poad
Brian Webber

TITLE

Senior Planner-Transportation
Transportation Planner

I. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 25, 2005 MEETING

Doug apologized for not getting the minutes out earlier. He told them to take them home and read at their leisure and they would vote on them next time.

II. FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION FROM GROUP REPRESENTATIVES:

Doug reviewed what they discussed at the January meeting. The 2004 Building Permit data that Brian did came out well. He informed them they didn't have the maps on the website yet, but they would soon. The land use data summary that we have been doing is now done. We are now using the data for various projects—one being the housing survey that Margy is working on and the transportation plan. Discussion followed.

Geneva asked if there were any extra maps. **Doug** replied yes, we have them downstairs.

Laura stated that they are neighborhood is going through a rezoning now and they are utilizing the Land Use data. We have a Professor from Purdue and his class of 22 people have split up and are taking it a little further. Discussion followed.

Steve stated that Sallie had interesting comments at the last APC meeting about vacancies.

Doug stated that in the Land Use survey we did the best we could. We looked to see if the house was occupied or vacant. It was rather interesting that we can sort this information by census block, census block group or census tract. Sallie had one of our staff members pull the information out by census block group, which is not a big area, but a medium area, and rather it is rather interesting where the vacancy areas are. One of the areas was Jackson Township. She quickly went through some of the information, which Margy put together, and it was interesting to see where houses needed repair or actually were dilapidated. She also mentioned that the houses that need repair might be where there are more vacancies, but that is not the case. There are areas that have very nice homes, but more vacancies.

Geneva said that Margy did a good job when she presented a couple months ago about foreclosures in Tippecanoe County. **Doug** said he would pass that along

III. PROGRAM

What's New with CityBus

John Metzinger, Manager of Development, gave his presentation. He said they come once a year and give an update on CityBus. It gives you a chance to provide input into our processes. Last year, 2004 was a banner year for CityBus. We carried 4.5 million riders. That was an increase of about 9% over the previous year. If you look at the last 5 years we seem to be on an upward trend on ridership. The number one reason is our relationship with Purdue. About 60% of our riders are Purdue students going to class and 10% are Purdue faculty and staff. Purdue impact is very critical to what CityBus does. Purdue and CityBus entered into an agreement in 1998, which provided for the campus route system. In 2004, we signed a similar agreement with Ivy Tech. Now Ivy Tech students ride for free. Ivy Tech ridership increased from 50 to around 150 per day.

John reviewed the CAD/AVL information. He went over various points/access points, signs, routing, ridership, in bus signs, and dispatching. He showed some charts and graphics and explained them. The driver now has the ability to text message a dispatcher instead of radio. It is now very quiet. We now have signs that let people know which bus is coming and when the next one will. We are providing passengers real time so they can plan their trip. This summer we will have one in Riehle Plaza operational. We hear the passengers love this stuff. He explained what the ADA law requires. Drivers now announce the street corner for blind people. We are looking at the LOGO statistics workstation. This is where all the ridership data and all the scheduling information comes in everyday and we can run reports to see how the scheduling is doing; we can see if the busses are running on time. There will be future changes to the website this summer. The real time data will be accessible online this fall. Trip planning is another important feature on our website. It is similar to map quest. He gave an example of a planned trip.

Tracy asked if you could tell with GPS if a driver is speeding through a neighborhood.

John said yes, what we can see with that is an odometer reading and we do get those kinds of reports. If someone would call and complain, we could use this data and go in and see if they were. Another is if a passenger complained that the bus never arrived; does that mean the bus was early or did the bus break down and not arrive?

Geneva asked what is the web address. John said www.gocitybus.com.

Tracy stated not to change your logo.

John told them about some minor route changes coming in August. These are primarily changes we are making to improve time performance. We have a few routes that have some problems during peak traffic times. We will be holding public meetings in April. We will formally be presenting routes changes at this time. Our plan is to take them to the Board of Directors in April or May and be able to implement them in August.

Robert asked where that meeting is. **John** said the meeting would be at CityBus, 1250 Canal Road, at 1:30 in the afternoon and at 5:15 p.m. on April 20. We are not planning on expanding the routes, given that funding is a concern, but we do recognize that the community is growing rapidly and placing new demands on CityBus as well as other modes of transportation. CR 350 S and 18th Street is an area we hear about a lot, because it is an underserved area from the CityBus standpoint. The nearest stop is Brady Lane, so it is quite a walk for people in that area. We know there is going to be a new Wal-Mart in that area, which is going to be a destination that a lot of our passengers will want to get to. That is something that we are going to have to look at. The area west of Klondike Road near West Lafayette is just exploding in terms of housing growth. A lot is Purdue-oriented housing for students, staff, and faculty; the new library is also planned out there. University Farms is another area that has a lot of potential from a bus-riding standpoint, again because of the Purdue connection. Those are some of the areas we are looking at. Over the course of public meetings there will be many other ideas expressed from the public, so we will have take those into consideration as well.

Robert asked on the free rides for students of Purdue and Ivy Tech, do you have a financial arrangement with Purdue and Ivy Tech? **John** answered yes, we sure do. Purdue pays CityBus around 1.1 million dollars per year. Out of that comes the funding for the campus loop system: those 30 buses that go around campus. Yes, Purdue is paying for the campus loop system.

Robert said he would like to make a comment. You are moving the bus company into the 21st century and I am pretty proud of that, but you are leaving the passengers back in the 19th century. I think you should do more to mind your customer business around Lafayette. You are not doing anything and I'm afraid the way social security is going I'm going to need the bus desperately, because I already have 1

vehicle in the driveway that I can't afford to fix and another one barely moving. He discussed cell phones and gave some suggestions. A lot of people he talks to would like to park their cars in the garage and forget it, if they could depend on the buses. They never know where the bus really is. I think the bus company should mind the passenger business in Lafayette like they do in Purdue.

John said you say that CityBus isn't minding passengers? Could you explain that?

Robert said minding the passenger business. He gave some history and personal experience.

John said that you are expressing the comments like that from market research that we did. People would be more inclined to use the bus if they knew when it was coming and how to use it. Living here in the rural Midwest in a relative small town as Lafayette and West Lafayette, we not as transit-oriented as you might be if you live in Chicago. Many students come from bigger towns and are transit-savvy. Hopping the bus and reading the schedules are nothing really new to them, but it is different for us here. That is one of the reasons that we are putting technology like this in place that will help. We need to have training sessions so people can learn how to read the bus schedules.

Robert said a lot of times he only sees 1, 2, or 3 passengers, and I cannot understand why the bus company would buy bigger buses when they only carry 1 or 2 people.

John said they have some shortest buses that are 30' long and longest buses are 60' long. These are our articulated buses that bend in the middle. You also raised a common perception about CityBus: people say we see the buses run around looking empty; how can that be a benefit to the community? The reason is that is the case the buses have very peak load times when they are full. Sometimes there can be unexpected off peak loads; for example, during the summer time, lots of kids groups or preschool groups ride the bus to the park or go on field trips.

Robert said if you let them know you would schedule a special bus for them. I don't think there would be a problem. **John** said that, whether it is a small bus or large buses, there are still operating expense. The operating costs are basically the same. Buying smaller buses there would be more expense for taxpayers, because we would have to double our fleet size. Also, there is the maintenance cost for maintaining them. That is why our board of directors has just opted, as is standard across transit agencies across the country, to consolidate the fleet size into the number of buses you need at peak times—and run them all day. Some of our routes have a mid-day reduction; instead of running every 30 minutes, they run once an hour. The cost to put a bus on a route is about \$45 an hour.

Laura said if gas prices keep going up you might have to change your tune. **John** stated like everyone the price of diesel has gone up about 50% from where it was a year ago. More discussion ensued.

Laura said, in the letter Doug sent, hybrid buses might be discussed.

Pat Wilkinson asked before you discuss that, I would like to ask about Wabash Center and Greenbush Industries; when they did the new curbing and pushed the buses off of Greenbush and off of 20th street it made a difference in safety. Are you going to do more of that?

John said they wish developers would work with us. The West Lafayette Wal-Mart has worked with us very well to plan and accommodate for a bus to go through their property. They are building a transit center, shelter and provide power for one of these wayside signs. University Place is another, but there are other places where people build it and then they call to ask about bus service. **Pat** said Meijer is horrible. More discussion ensued

John stated he had talked to Marty about including hybrids, and he said that it is kind of unrealistic that we are going to buy any. He went over it briefly. He went over an effort to develop hybrid business. He stated there was a lobbying effort on a state level.

Laura asked if it was on a national level. **John** said it is still a challenge. A couple people discussed the differences that they had seen.

Steve Clevenger asked what the difference in mileage was. **John** stated that the numbers he had looked at reduced the costs by 50%. He gave a few examples. There was more discussion.

Geneva asked how the Lafayette School System children riding for free with valid ID was funded. **John** said it isn't funded. Those are the only truly free riders.

Geneva stated that at their association meeting, there was the safety factor, which you talked about. Can they use these passes in the summer? **John** stated that yes as long as they are 22 or younger with a valid ID. He thanked the crowd for having him.

2004 Traffic Count Map.

Brian handed out maps. He stated that these are the 2004 Lafayette, West Lafayette and Tippecanoe County traffic counts. He went over the Traffic Count maps and gave general information. He said some of interesting features of this map is the traffic at 9th and 18th street and Concord Road is getting pretty heavy, especially further away from town center. We like to get counts for each major intersection leg once every three years. I started with the 1991 – 2001 map. I've done a 2002 and a 2003 map; the 2004 map is the latest one.

Geneva asked what did you use to get this information. **Brian** stated both the cities and the county have actual traffic counters. He explained how they work.

Doug stated you would see a lot of them out now. INDOT is taking a lot of counts now on state roads.

Laura asked where they were placed. **Brian** said as close to the intersection as possible. Discussion ensued about major changes.

Brian stated that in our office we have lists of when and where the counts were taken if anybody is interested. He tries to get as many counts on the map as possible.

Pat said, bringing CityBus back into this: have you noticed any changes in traffic counts now that there is free fare for students? **Doug** stated that we haven't studied it. To do a study they would have to have a lot of counts on various roads and unfortunately, with the county and cities own personnel and counting needs, it is very difficult to get all the counts in. We try to get as many as we can, and like Brian said, we try to do this every 3 years. The State also tries to do their counting every 3 years as well.

Pat wanted to know if we worked with West Lafayette with their loop thing going on and cutting cars out of the middle of campus. **Doug** said yes we were a part of that process.

Pat asked the buses would have access, but not the cars. **John** stated that when the road changes are made, it is so far ahead it was hard to say. He explained how the loop would work. Discussion followed on the different things that might affect how the loop was run.

Doug pointed out that Brian did spend extra work on this map. The geography on this map is based on the County's GIS geography, so it is accurate. Unlike previous maps, we used the census geography and it looked ok, but it was not accurate.

Pat asked if we had been approached with any of your bus information and traffic information concerning relocating kids to other schools and such.

Doug stated that we provide services to some of the school corporations. We provide a report on where new subdivisions will be at and predictions of new houses and where we think they will go. We even looked a couple years ago where will any more houses go, and we provided that information upon their request.

John said that the school corporation has not approached CityBus. I am hoping that we will become a part of that process down the road. I am sure they are putting together transportation plan and they will probably want to include our regular routes, which would balance with the yellow buses.

Robert said, I want to direct your attention to N 9th Street: where is that 4,000 difference in counts coming from? **Doug** said that Burnett is being used as a crossover to get to the interstate. People are going up 9th street or going to Battle Ground. Over the last 15 years, the number of persons living outside the county, and commuting to work has increased.

Geneva asked if we get a lot of people from Attica and Crawfordsville area to Lafayette for employment. **Doug** said it is pretty substantial, you won't see that on this map. That would be out SR 25 mostly or SR 28 and up US 231. SR 25 the last time we took a traffic count at the new US 231 intersection was around

10 or 11,000 vehicles a day on the westside of 231. Definitely, we will see what is happening when we get the counts from the state this year. Discussion followed.

Pat wanted to know if we knew when Teal Road would not be SR 25 would switch out to 350 S, it would help out a lot. **Doug** said he didn't think it would make much difference. He gave examples. He reminded them that we have older traffic count maps in our office. They are also on our website.

Brian said he has seen these maps up at police stations.

IV. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR SUGGESTIONS

Pat asked when John mentioned that CityBus could work with developers, wouldn't that be a place for transportation portion of APC take the initiative and ask the developers to include CityBus? You guys have the first clue of what's happening anyway. **Doug** stated that what we have started doing when we get developments, we have CityBus sit in as a point source, like for example when the information is submitted to us we send it to Vectron, Verizon and other checkpoint agencies to actually review and make comments. There was discussion about the different locations and the problems there.

John said there were a lot of positive comments about the pull off at Greenbush. Like Purdue includes a lot of pull offs for buses. It is a safer environment for everyone.

Geneva said one her neighbors had a question, whether we had considered a left-hand turn at 18th and South Street. They have had several close calls because your view is blocked. **Doug** said he thought that was requested on one of the hot spot lists. There were intersections we have asked INDOT to look at. I don't recall any that they have implemented. There was more discussion about putting left-hand turn signals at intersections.

Doug said we want to put a link on the website to INDOT, Crawfordsville, but it is not up yet. He told them what all they look at when they consider this.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Doug thanked everyone for coming. He asked if there were any topics or suggestions they would like to discuss in May.

Pat asked if it was almost time for the vehicle crash report. **Doug** said it was going to be a while. He gave a little history. It has been a number of years since we have done one. We do it every year, but unfortunately the last year of information we did it for was 2000. In 2001 all police departments switched to new forms, and that created a lot of problems. Because people in Indianapolis, at the State Police actually looked at each report and hand typed all the data into a computer database. When they went over to the new report, it was scanned in. So trying to get that data to mesh in 2001 has been very difficult. They finally got that fixed and finished and gave us that data, but they missed 2 months between the 2 databases. Brian is going through each report for those missed days and typing that data in.

Brian said that when he thought he was done with the missing six weeks, he found out that there were six more weeks of missing data that was scattered throughout the year.

Doug said that it will be a while we have that database that Brian is working on, we have the data for 2002, and 2003. When we get up to speed we will be able to download the crash data in real-time, even a week afterward. When we get up to speed hopefully after a year is complete somebody on our staff can start work on a report within a month or two. We will have very accurate and quick information.

Pat asked when another hot-spot list is to be done.

Doug said maybe we could do that next month. INDOT usually has a public hearing in August, late July or September and that would give us plenty of time to forward the information.

Pat said could you tell Tracy and Laura what it is. **Doug** explained what and why we take suggestions from the committee. It is a way we can take your comments and concerns and pass it on.

Pat said she wanted to know by Caterpillar, where they are putting a lot of restaurants, how are dump trucks and stuff coming in and out of there? Is there going to be a designated way for them to go in and out? I can see that being a real nightmare.

Doug said the group that is developing that corner has submitted a traffic plan, or an estimate of what the impacts will be if that proposed development would be fully developed. The city got a copy of it and we looked at it. INDOT said that this was not acceptable, made the consultant redo it. I don't know if they have submitted a new report or not.

There were questions and discussion about the ALCOA site development.

Doug gave a few stories that had been passed onto him about the Caterpillar project. He thanked them all for coming.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 24, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Toman
Bookkeeper/Secretary

Reviewed by,

Brian Weber
Transportation Planner